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For Immediate Release

Three SRS Firefighters Selected for New South Carolina Task Force

Aiken, S.C., June 3 -- Three SRS firefighters have joined the newly formed South Carolina Emergency Response Task Force (SCERTF), Urban Search & Rescue Team. The three, Ken Bell, Rudy Dinkins and Emory Johnson, were selected for their emergency response skills, knowledge and experience.

SCERTF will respond to natural and man-made disasters to provide search and rescue, medical support, damage assessment, and assist in the coordination of relief. This new organization would also respond to hurricanes, which pose an annual threat to our state.

The SCERTF was formed by the State of South Carolina as a result of the World Trade Center Towers disaster and the subsequent creation of Homeland Security.

The first phase of this planning created the Urban Search & Rescue Team, South Carolina Task Force One (SC-TF1). SC-TF1 consists of three task force groups each staffed with 70 members. Each group is staffed with experts in all areas of emergency response. Approximately two years in the making, the task force was recently declared in operational readiness to respond.

Ken Bell, a SRSFD Captain, is one of six leaders of the Program Management Group and a member of the Command Staff, which provides overall leadership and guidance to the task force. Two other SRSFD members were also selected to fill key leadership roles in the SCERTF organization. They are Capt. Rudy Dinkins, one of six Task Force Leaders and a member of the Command Staff; and Firefighter/Paramedic Emory Johnson, one of six Planning/Technical Support Managers. These SRS fire fighters participate in SCERTF activities, in addition to the important work they do at SRS.

Bell said he is pleased he can share his knowledge of emergency preparedness and response to assist others, "I am very proud to have been selected as a leader of this worthwhile effort that will help protect all the people in our State during a disaster," he said. "I believe my training and experience at SRS clearly played a role in my appointment to the Program Management Group."

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He also said he was pleased to have Dinkins and Johnson as members playing leadership roles on this new team.

The SRS Fire Department consists of 86 highly-skilled and competent people who are trained to save lives, property and the environment. They played a key role in the recent Granittville Rail Disaster earlier this year.

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